CHAPTER 14

# Introduction to *Psychoanalysis: The Science of Mental Conflict: Essays in Honor of Charles Brenner*

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> What words one uses in constructing one's theories and what their derivatives were is less important, in most instances, than what meaning the words have in terms of the new data and new generalizations about those data that constitute psychoanalytic theory. Words for what is new necessarily derive from what is familiar. This means neither that the words that have been redefined in this way should be retained nor that they should be replaced. Sometimes one course is followed, sometimes the other. Either can be defended or preferred, provided one realizes that it makes no great difference. It is not language that is important. One can think or speak in one language as well as in another. What one says is the important thing, not how one says it [Brenner, 1980, p. 208].

This passage from "Metapsychology and Psychoanalytic Theory" is quintessentially Charles Brenner. Although he penned these remarks in the context of his defense of the language of metapsychology, they stand as eloquent testimony to the values that have guided him throughout a distinguished career as both theorist and practitioner.

This is the credo of a "classical" analyst, disinclined to supplant the language of Freud's discoveries with trendier words that offer no real gain to conceptual understanding or explanatory power. It is at the same time the credo of a classical analyst who understands full well that theory-building is an evolving enterprise and that the words through which the analyst frames his theories must themselves evolve if they are to do justice to the ever growing data base generated by the psychoanalytic method. If for three decades Brenner has been content to innovate by addressing the meaning of traditional psychoanalytic concepts, drive, defense, super-ego, affect, it is because he has never

been a revolutionary, intent on demolishing the psychoanalytic edifice bequeathed us by Freud. His appreciation of the fundamental principles that are Freud's legacy has cultivated in him a great respect for the language in which these principles were formulated. It is Brenner's signal strength to have retained the language of classical analysis, all the while showing how the meaning of psychoanalytic concepts must evolve if analysis is to remain a fully adequate science of mind.

Brenner is no psychoanalytic maverick. He has no "school" and seeks no "followers." Yet he has emerged as one of the preeminent theorists of his generation, one whose substantive innovations are masked by the classical terminology he retains and by his modest disclaimers that his theoretical contributions are but clarifications or refinements of traditional thinking. As I hope to demonstrate, however, Brenner's contributions in a variety of areas are far from incremental; they culminate in significant reformulations and bear witness to the continuing ability of classical psychoanalytic discourse to accommodate the growth of psychoanalytic knowledge. And this is perhaps Charles Brenner's greatest contribution as both theoretician and educator, to have shown that the concepts of classical analysis are not frozen in the past but rather are flexible instruments of conceptual and clinical advance. He is a conservative who believes in process, and his work admirably bears out his cautionary reminder that "what one says is the important thing, not how one says it."

## PSYCHOANALYSIS AS SCIENCE

Brenner's *Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis,* first published in 1955 and revised in 1973, is the most notable explication of psychoanalytic principles in the history of the discipline. It has probably been read by more analysts, psychiatrists, psychologists, physicians, and students than any other work in the field. In its elegance and lucidity, it is matched only by Freud's own Introductory Lectures. It is in this early work that Brenner outlined the principles that guide him in his estimation of psychoanalysis as a natural science. For Brenner, it is Freud's discovery of the psychoanalytic method and his objective attitude toward the data generated by this method that place analysis squarely within the domain of the natural sciences. This distinctive method of data gathering, along with the interrelated hypotheses of psychic determinism and unconscious mental processes, is one of three pillars of the psychoanalytic edifice.

The language of psychoanalytic theory is commensurate with the data obtained by means of the psychoanalytic method. The heuristic test of this language is its clinical explanatory value.

Corollary to this perspective is Brenner's belief that the mere fact that it is possible to reformulate analysis in language compatible with that of other disciplines says nothing about the desirability of such translation. In a contribution published in 1969, he discusss Gardner's attempt to make psychoanalytic terminology dovetail with the language of neurophysiology. Brenner (1969a) observes that Gardiner's integrated strategy is belied by the fact that Gardiner "thinks" in terms of neurophysiology and aims at a unified science in which the concepts of both disciplines become coterminous with those of chemistry and physics. Lost in this intgrative shuffle, however, is the distinctive nature of psychoanalytic data, the complex thought processes issuing in wishes, fantasies, and anxieties. Until the precise relationship between mental representation and, neuronal functions can be stipulated, which neither Gardner nor any of his successors has been able to do, it is idle to judge the admissibility of psychoanalytic concepts in terms of their compatibility with neurophysiology. Analogizing at the level of terminology, which is all Gardner really does, cannot establish conceptual compatibility and can provide no basis for jettisoning the mere metapsychological language commensurate with psychoanalytic data.

Brenner further observes that Gardner's attempt to place a notion of "organismic equilibration" at the heart of psychoanalytic theory is fraught with logical difficulties: "If one follows the line of reasoning which it embodies, one would expect that evolution has eliminated psychosis and severe neurosis altogether or that it will do so in the course of time" (p. 50). Brenner adds that an equilibration model does violence to the data of psychoanalytic observation by ignoring the fact that "the urge to achieve instinctual gratification and to avoid unpleasure dominates mental activity to an extraordinary degree" (p. 51). For Brenner, then, "the pleasure principle is not only central to the psychoanalytic theory of the drives; it is central to the whole of the psychoanalytic theory of mental conflict as well" (p. 51). In supplanting this principle with an organismic "need" to adapt to external stimuli or to achieve a table equilibrium among opposing tendencies of the mind, theorists ignore the facts of mental life as disclosed by the psychoanalytic method: "Such theories may explain very well what the experimenter observes in a psychological laboratory. But they do not explain nor do they fit what the clinician

daily observes of the wellsprings of human behavior and the conflict in human life to which they give rise" (p. 51).

Such remarks are central to Brenner's work and highlight the radical disjunction between his approach and that of theorists like George Klein, Heinz Kohut, and John Gedo. The latter all evoke some notion of the "self and its organization in order to supplant the pleasure principle with an updated version of Gardner's organismic equilibration hypothesis. In "Psychoanalysis and Science/' a paper presented in 1968 and stimulated in part by the New York University Symposium on "Psychoanalysis and Scientific Method" in the fifties, Brenner amplified his response to Gardner. He argues that a science is defined not by the nature of the subject matter under investigation but rather by the approach it adopts toward that subject matter. It is by virtue of the analyst's investigative attitude that psychoanalysis qualifies as a natural science. In adopting this position, Brenner was disputingthe claim, made most forcefully by Kohut in his influential paper of 1959, that analysis departs from the natural sciences by virtue of its reliance on "introspection" in its data gathering.

Brenner maintains, contra Kohut, that introspection is a notoriously unreliable tool for obtaining information about mental phenomena: "An independent and outside observer with the help of the psychoanalytic method can gain a far more accurate and useful and informative view of the mental functioning of the patient's verbal communications, than anyone can from introspection" (p. 689). For Brenner, the introspective tendency to attribute our own thoughts and feelings to others is something "we must unlearn with experience." He agrees that we may reasonably assume that other people's minds are very similar to our own, but adds that "it is risky to go too far in this direction, that too great a reliance on what we call empathy and intuition leads to the undesirable type of activity that we call wild analysis" (p. 690).

In "Psychoanalysis: Philosophy or Science" (1970). a contribution to *Psychoanalysis and Philosophy,* he buttresses his argument by stressing that Freud did not "base his theories on introspective data but on observation—in particular on the close and extended observation of mentally, ill (neurotic) patients who came to him for treatment" (p. 36). Freud's unparalleled achievements, he believes, derive not from his introspective powers but from his ability to evaluate with scientific objectivity "previously unknown and largely unsuspected data derived from the psychoanalytic method" (p. 37). In the guise of self psychol-

ogy, Kohut's contrary position of 1959 would blossom into the point of view that Freud's greatness derived largely fom disciplined introspection, and that it is *only* through introspection and empathy that the analyst obtains important data about his patients' mental functioning. For Brenner, the pleasure principle and "extrospection" *of* the natural scientist would remain central.

Brenner's most recent contribution on the scientific status of psychoanalysis is the 1980 "Metapsychology and Psychoanalytic Theory." Here, in response to critics such as George Klein and Merton Gill and Roy Schafer, who deem metapsychologyan undesirable, pseudoscientific accretion to the "hermeneutic" core of analysis, Brenner undertakes a careful review of Freud's various uses of the term, beginning with a statement in 1898 in which he construed metapsychology as the bridge connecting the unconscious biological and the conscious psychological. At a later stage in his career, Freud equated metapsychology with the psychology of the unconscious, and still later in his 1915 paper "The Unconscious," he seemed to equate the metapsychological with the economic aspects of mental functioning. But Brenner goes on to adduce fairly compelling evidence that Freud ultimately came to equate metapsychology with psychoanalytic theory in general, rather than simply with the psychoanalytic theory of unconscious mental processes; in Freud's footnote to the title of , "Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams" (1915b). "metapsychology" and "psychological system" are used synonymously.

On the basis of this philological judgment, Brenner takes issue with the attempt by Rapaport and Gill (1959) to dissect metapsychology into six discrete assumptions and viewpoints. His argument is that each viewpoint invoked by Rapaport and Gill implicates all the others, so that "so-called structural theory, for example, is not merely a structural point of view. Its propositions are dynamic, genetic, adaptive, economic, and structural propositions" (p. 198). In short, metapsychology as a notational shorthand for psychoanalytic theory cannot be differentiated from the individual viewpoints that jointly comprise it: metapsychology itself *denote* the fact of this mutual implication. Psychoanalytic understanding and the theory that encapsulates it is the confluence of these several viewpoints.

In a related vein, Brenner takes issue with the attempt by Robert Waelder (1962) to divide psychoanalysis into a hierarchy of "levels" based on a putative proximity to the data of observation. Disputing Waelder's

judgment that metapsychology is less proximate to the data and hence "far less necessary" to analysis than less abstract levels of explanation, Brenner argues that Waelder's entire classificatory schema is based on a fundamental misconception "of the nature of scientific observation and theory formation":

> In every branch of science even the simplest observations involve ideas of the highest order of abstraction. In physics, for example, such high level abstractions as space and time are data of observation. In psychoanalysis, as in every other branch of science, both theories and observations involve greater numbers of abstractions. What makes a theory useful and dependable has no relation whatever to its abstractedness. A theory is either well supported by a large amount of data that are relevant, or, it is poorly supported by data. The correct basis for a hierarchy of theories of any science is not abstractness or concreteness. It is the degree to which a given theory is supported by the relevant data *or,* conversely, how speculative it is. "Speculative" is not a synonym for "abstract," nor is "well supported by relevant data" its antonym [p. 200].

Through his defense of metapsychology as a mode of discourse commensurate with psychoanalytic data, Brenner returns to his view that analysis as a natural science takes up an observational stance no different from that of other natural sciences. He disputes the hermeneutic claim that analysis forfeits its claim to scientific status by virtue of its preoccupation with "meaning." For Brenner, the analytic concern with meaning only highlights the fact that analysis is a separate branch of science addressing its particular subject in the manner of any other science:

> The data of psychoanalysis are principally wishes, fears, fantasies, dreams, neurotic symptoms, associative material, etc., expressed in language and gestures that have meaning. In other words, psychoanalysts do deal with meanings as data, which physicists and neurophysiologists, for example, do not. But what psychoanalysts *do* with their data is no different in principle from what any other scientists do with their data. What psychoanalysts do that is of particular importance . . . is that they make inferences with respect to the causes of the wishes, fears, fantasies, dreams, neurotic symptoms, and associative material that constitute their data of obser-

> vation. They postulate the same cause and effect relationships with respect to their data as physicists, for example, do with respect to theirs. That is to say, psychoanalysts try to discover or, to be more precise, to infer what it is that causes the normal and pathological mental phenomena they observe. Their discoveries or inferences are what constitute psychoanalytic theory, just as, for example, Newton's inferences, which are more usually called his laws of motion, constitute the theory of celestial and terrestial mechanics that bears his name [p. 205].

It is from this standpoint, and with the data of psychoanalytic observation in mind, that Brenner proceeds to defend the much attacked notion of psychic energy.

> Is it justified and useful as a concept and as a term? I believe so, but not because the word, energy, was derived in the first instance from a term and concept of physics. I believe so because I think that drive theory is a valid and useful generalization (theory) about mental functioning and that in that theory there should be some term to designate the concept that drives have the capacity to impel the mind to activity- a capacity that varies in strength from time to time. What that concept is called *matters not at all, any more than it matters whether one speaks English, French, Spanish, or German in discussing it. Call it psychic energy, motivation, impetus, or "abc."The tag is unimportant. It is the concept that matters. If you drop the concept altogether, as many analysts would like to do, you have to discard drive theory as well and* you have to substitute something else for it. Just changing the *name* from "drive" to, say, "motivation" changes nothing in the theory. It makes the theory no more "psychological," no less "mechanistic," no more "human," than it was before [pp. 210–211].

Here, as always, Brenner's concern is not with words but with the theoretical assumptions that underlie them and the implications of these assumptions for psychoanalytic theory-building. To jettison the notion of psychic energy is to abandon drive theory in its common form; it is to make a "real change" in psychoanalytic theory, which has held since Freud that mental life is composed of conscious and unconscious wishes that impinge on the mental apparatus with varying degrees of intensity.

In drawing attent tion both to the assumptions that underlie the abandonment of individual psychoanalytic concepts and to the implications of such a move, Brenner highlights the magnitude of Freud's achievement: the promulgation of a theory of mental life that achieves cohesiveness and explanatory force through the conceptual interweaving of all its major concepts.

## THE DRIVES, AGGRESSION, AND STRUCTURAL THEORY

In the second chapter of the *Elementary Textbook,* Brenner (1955) suggests a position on the drives that dovetails in most essentials with that of Freud. The drives, he tells his readers, are "abstractions from the data of experience. They are hypotheses-operational concepts, to use a term which is fashionable nowadays—which we believe enable us to understand and explain our data in as simple and as systematic a way as possible" (p. 20). His contention that there are two kinds of psychic energy, one associated with libido and one with the aggressive drive, implies a basically biological concept of the drives. He departs from Freud only in contesting the validity of the concept of repetition compulsion and the idea that the gratification associated with aggression is beyond the pleasure principle. With respect to the latter point, he is content to cite Hartmann and inform the reader that "the majority of psychoanalysts appear to have accepted this view" (p. 30).

In chapter 2 of *The Mind in Conflict,* written almost 30 years later in 1982, Brenner draws a clearer distinction between his views and those of Freud. At the onset, alluding to Freud's concept of the instinct as a "frontier concept" at the interface of mind and body, he disputes the contention that psychoanalytic data by themselves can never be an adequate basis for a satisfactory theory of the drives. Rather, Brenner argues that a satisfactory theory of drives can derive *only* from psychoanalytic data. In contesting the need to anchor psychoanalytic drive theory in nonanalytic data derived from biology, physiology, animal observation, and the like, Brenner also contests Freud's attempt to "biologize" libido by tracing its origins to particular regions of the body. For Brenner, as for Freud, the connections between libido and the erogenous zones are "indisputable and intimate," but Brenner adds that "this is not the same as saying that libido arises from mouth, anus, genitals, etc." (p. 14). He

then cites certain facts that weigh against Freud's conceptualization, including the intensification of libidinal wishes at the time of menopause and the climacteric, and the efflorescense of sexual wishes during the oedipal period. Brenner continues:

> Everyday analytic experience demonstrates, for example, that events occurring in the context of a relationship between patient and analyst, such as impending separation or the commencement of analysis, can powerfully increase, i.e., stimulate, the urgency of libidinal wishes, but no one would conclude from such observation that the relationship between patient and analyst, i.e., the transference, is a source of libido, much less the source of it. In the same way, it is not truly convincing to conclude from the very intimate relationship between erogenous zones and libidinal derivatives that the zones are the *source* of the libidinal drive. That they are intimately linked is certain. That one is the source of the other is less so [pp. 14–15].

In the seemingly fine distinction that concludes this passage, we see Brenner's emancipation from certain mechanistic accoutrements of Freud's approach to motivation. It is tantamount to the espousal of an entirely psychological and "personalized" approach to drive behavior. This attitude carries over to Brenner's discussion of aggression (1971 b). Here he differentiates between the theory of the aggressive drive, which derives from "the accumulation of psychoanalytic evidence," and the theory of the death instinct, through which Freud sought to give the phenomenon of human aggressiveness a transcendent biological meaning. Brenner argues that just as Freud required a somatic source for libido, that is, the excitation of the nerve endings in the erogenous zones, so he required one for aggression. He believed he had located this in "the universal tendency of living matter to die," an idea Brenner finds invalid on grounds both empirical and logical. More important, it cannot be inferred from psychoanalytic data and so has no place in psychoanalytic explanation. Clinical explanations of aggression, including self-destructive behavior, implicate only those aspects of Freud's theory that derive from psychoanalytic data. Through such data we

> explain such behavior in terms of murderous childhood wishes, fears of retribution, fears of loss, and self-punitive trends. None

> of these depend on the assumption that a death drive is common to all living matter. It depends essentially on the data furnished by the application of the psychoanalytic method [p. 21].

Brenner's critique of the death instinct as nonpsychological and nonpsychoanalytic paves the way for his redefinition of the drives as "generalizations" about two classes of "wishes" corresponding to two types of motivation. This definition, in turn, leads him to accord pride of place not to the drive itself, but to drive derivatives, the "wish for gratification" that is uniquely individual. It is in his attention to the variousness of drive derivatives as uniquely individual embodiments of the drives that Brenner approaches the position of hermeneuticists like George Klein and Roy Schafer. For Brenner, that is, it is insufficient simply to impute to analysands libidinal or aggressive conflicts stemming from their drives. And it is of little moment to go one step further and categorize the analysand's wishes as oral, anal, or phallic. Rather,

> What is important in respect to each patient is to learn as much as possible about the libidinal ad aggressive drive derivatives which are important at the moment, including their relationship to childhood derivatives and to subsequent experience and development. What is important, in other words, is to learn as much as possible about what a patient wishes, about who is involved in his wishes, about how and why he has just those particular wishes about those particular persons [p. 26].

It is ironic that Brenner, in his sensitivity to the experiential specificity of the analysand's conflicting wishes, adopts a position of nominal agreement with those analysts who, unlike him, seek to dispense entirely with psychoanalytic metapsychology. The essential difference, of course, is that Brenner arrives at his position using the language and conceptual framework of classical analysis. Indeed, his stance is a refinement of classical thinking; it is premised on an entirely psychoanalytic appreciation of the drives and generalizations about wishes. Klein (1976) and Schafer (1976). on the other hand, feel that they can articulate the singularity of the individual's conflicts and wishes and wishful impulses only by supplanting psychoanalytic drive theory, which includes the crucial notion of the drive derivative, with a new vocabulary and a new conceptual framework. Brenner finds such departures gratuitous:

> Critics of the psychoanalytic theory of the drives often charge that it is impersonal and mechanistic. The facts do not justify the charge. Such critics either ignore or misunderstand the distinction between drive and drive derivative. The former is impersonal and general, the latter is general and specific. Drive theory includes both (p. 26).

It is to Brenner's lasting credit to have shown how clarifying emendations to the psychoanalytic theory of the drives, which amount to Freud's own position refined and shorn of the extraanalytic presuppositions, culminate in a substantive revision of the structural theory. Rejecting Freud's speculations about the biological origins of the drives, Brenner is led to reassess the notion of the id, which Freud envisioned as the repository of the drives. Freud, and most analysts since him, viewed the drives as constitutionally determined and present from the very beginnning of postnatal life. The clear implication is that drives are more independent of experience than are those aspects of mental functioning subsumed under the rubric of "ego." Brenner, however, drawing on all the available psychoanalytic evidence, suggests that drive-related activities, whether libidinal or aggressive, are from birth influenced by experiential factors that gain expression in ego development. In short, clinical analysis does not sustain the separation of ego development from issues of drive expression and drive gratification. It follows that a sharp distinction between ego and id, even a sharp *heuristic* distinction, must be brought into question.

Brenner makes the same point when he notes that what psychoanalytic theory subsumes under ego functions are distinguishable from drives and drive derivatives only in situations of conflict. Ego functions, he reminds us, are executants of drives and hence come into opposition to drives only when drive derivatives evoke unpleasure and defense. For Brenner, then, conflict is a *sine qua non* of structural theory itself. In *The Mind in Conflict* (1982a). he supports this point by appealing to Anna Freud's remark that "in the absence of conflict there is no division among the mental agencies, or, in other words, no id, ego, or superego" (p. 73). In a similar vein, he cites David Beres, who remarked that in order to be consistent, repressed wishes and fantasies must be regarded as belonging properly in the heading of the ego. In thus stressing the role of the ego in drive gratification from the very beginning of life, he implicitly departs from Freud, who was content to situate repressed wishes first in "the

unconscious" of the topographical theory and ultimately in the "id" of structural theory.

Brenner's reformulation of structural theory culminates in the revised estimation of the superego set forth in chapter 8 of *The Mind in Conflict* (1982). In the *Elementary Textbook* (1955) Brenner accepted the traditional view of the superego as one agency in the psychic apparatus. In articles published over the next two decades (1959,1982a). he significantly enlarged our clinical appreciation of this mental agency by drawing attention to the role of both masochism and libidinal gratification in superego formation. By contrast, in *The Mind in Conflict* Brenner offers an entirely new perspective on the superego, construing it as a compromise formation functionally analogous to other compromise formations revealed by psychoanalytic investigation: neurotic symptoms, dreams, delusions, character traits, and so on. Brenner continues to stress that the superego is a "structure" that enters into psychic conflict along with id and ego. But as id and ego are presumably *not* compromise formations, Brenner's recent formulations appear to forego the symmetry of the three intrapsychic agencies of traditional structural theory. This suggests that, implicitly at least, Brenner has arrived at a theoretical juncture where he questions the validity and clinical usefulness of conceptualizing mental-life in terms of three structurally equivalent mental agencies. I will not venture to predict where Brenner's theorizing will lead him, beyond speculating that his forthcoming contributions will offer increasingly nuanced depictions of the interrelated constituents of psychic conflict while simultaneously incorporating certain features of the hermeneutic theorists like Klein and Schafer. Brenner seems to have understood well the aphorism of his friend and colleague, Jacob Arlow, that id, ego, and sperego exist not in the patient but in psychoanalytic textbooks. It is conceivable that Brenner will eventually articulate a model of the mind in conflict in which the interpretation of the elements of conflict is such that the traditional concepts of id, ego, and superego become superfluous.

## AFFECTS

For Brenner the problem of affect is coterminous with the problem of anxiety. His earliest publication on the topic, misleadingly entitled "An Addendum to Freud's Theory of Anxiety" (1953). is actually a seminal contribution to affect theory that paves the way for his recent formulations regarding depressive affect. Brenner begins by arguing against

Freud's theories of actual and traumatic neuroses. Here again his point of departure is diametrically opposite that of Kohut, whose early acceptance of the concept of actual neurosis was crucial to his later theorizing (Ornstein, 1978).

With respect to actual neurosis, Brenner critically reviews the data suggesting that anxiety can arise automatically owing to a quantitative flooding of the psychic apparatus. His conclusion is that analysis has not generated any data suggesting that anxiety can emerge independently of a psychical source. Otherwise, he finds no evidence of Freud's claim that neurotic anxiety can arise from simple frustration or sexual strivings. Returning to the traumatic neuroses, Brenner finds that available analytic data contradict Freud: they suggest that the anxiety associated with traumatic states derives from the conflicts evoked by traumautic situations and not from a "rupture of the stimulus barrier, that is, from the sexually quantitative variations in psychic energy or citation" (1953, p. 21).

Brenner considers one final basis for Freud's views on the actual neurosis, a point central to the "addendum" he proceeds to formulate. This concerns the affective state of infants who are separated from their mothers. Brenner suggests that we cannot really know *what* an infant experiences under such circumstances and that it is therefore unwarrantedly adultomorphic to equate the infant's emotion with "anxiety." For Brenner it makes more sense to characterize the emotion of the traumatically distressed infant as "extreme unpleasure rather than specifically as anxiety, although we may reasonably assume that as the infant matures it develops the capacity to be anxious in danger situations." Pursuing this line of reasoning, Brenner offers the following conceptualization:

> Anxiety is an emotion (affect) which the anticipation of danger evokes in the ego. It is not present, as such, from birth or very early infancy. In such very early periods, the infant is aware only of pleasure or unpleasure as far as emotions are concerned. As experience increases and other ego functions develop (e.g., memory and sensory perception). the child becomes able to predict or anticipate that a state of unpleasure (a "traumatic situation") will develop. This drawing ability of a child to react to danger in advance is the beginning of the specific emotion of anxiety, which in the course of further development we propose becomes sharply differentiated from other unpleasant emotions [p. 22].

Brenner's formulation, like Freud's, rests "on the assumption that there is a genetic, relation between anxiety in later life and the emotion of the child in traumatic situations of infancy" (p. 23). But unlike Freud's theory of the actual neurosis, Brenner's alternative explanation "leaves open the possibility that the emotion experienced in the traumatic situation is also related genetically to other unpleasant emotions in later life" (p. 23). In a revealing passage that foreshadows his future theoretical concerns, Brenner adds that his formulation leaves open the possibility that this state of psychic helplessness that we associate with traumatic situations may be "the forebearer of depression as well as anxiety" (p. 23).

The addendum of 1953, an important revision of the psychoanalytic theory of affects, is revealing of how in general Brenner approaches the task of theory-building. He begins with a careful review of Freud's contributions on a topic, locates an aspect of Freud's theory that is not borne out by clinical data, and then offers a clinically based reformulation that serves as a point of departure for subsequent theorizing. In this instance, his differentiation of the infant's reaction to danger and the child's (and the adult's) experience of anxiety ties the latter to the maturation of ego functions and, hence, to psychological referents. As an added benefit, "it avoids the unwelcome necessity of assuming that there are two kinds of anxiety" (p. 22). Finally, in suggesting that affect theory must posit developmental linkages not only between infantile unpleasure and later anxiety, but between such unpleasure and the crystallization of unpleasant affect, it opens an avenue for future theoretical work.

But it was not until twenty years later, in a presentation for the 28th International Psychoanalytic Congress, that Brenner took up the challenge posed by his early paper. He begins "Depression, Anxiety, and Affect Theory" (1974a) by reprising the basic premise of the 1953 "Addendum": "that early in life, before any substantial degree of ego development has taken place, all affects can be divided into pleasurable and unpleasurable" (p. 29). Now, however, he makes this point to highlight the fact that the generic unpleasure associated with the traumatic insults of infancy are the source not only of later experiences of anxiety but of experiences of depression as well: 'These emotions, too, no less than the emotions of anxiety,are genetically related to the unpleasure of the traumatic state; in some ways they develop out of it" (p. 30). Brenner next distinguishes between the unpleasurable affects of anxiety and grief by appealing to their differing ideational content:

> Grief, for example, is unpleasure associated with ideas that in general have to do with instinctual frustration, i.e., disappointment, with ideas of inadequacy, inferiority, with ideas of loneliness and often the idea that things will never be any better, that frustration, loneliness, and inferiority will persist, that they are inevitable (p. 30).

Thus Brenner invokes a temporal referent to differentiate the two principal categories of affect: anxiety concerns something bad that will happen in the future, depression something bad that has already happened. The nexus of Brenner's theory of affects, then, is "that psychologically, i.e., subjectively speaking, affects are distinguishable from one another on only two grounds. First, whether they are pleasurable or unpleasurable, and second, what thoughts are connected with them, what their ideational content is" (p. 30).

Brenner systematizes this idea in a companion paper, "On the Nature and Development of Affects, A Unified Theory" (1974b). Here affects are introduced as complex phenomena that include sensations of pleasure, unpleasure, pleasure and unpleasure in varying combinations, and ideas. A pleasurable or unpleasurable sensation together with an associated idea constitutes the mental phenomenon known as an affect. Affects originate early in life, when ideas first become linked to sensations of pleasure and unpleasure. The development of affects, and their differentiation from one another, go hand in hand with subsequent ego and superego development. The advantages of Brenner's unified theory of affects are manifold. Consistent with his innovations in other areas, this theory reformulates what we can know about affects from the data of clinical analysis. In so doing, he dispenses with unwarranted biological inferences that cannot be verified by analysis and with more subjective inferences about the nature of the "emotions" experienced very early in life. At the clinical heuristic level it provides criteria for distinguishing different affects, along with a workable language for explaining these differences.

The clinical yield of Brenner's theory is perhaps more salient with respect to depression. By situating the anlagen of depression in the amorphous unpleasure of early life, he shows how adult depression, no less than adult anxiety, yields to analytic unraveling with respect to its essential structure and meaning. Like symptoms of anxiety, depressive symptoms are crystallizations of complex affect, that is, compromise formations

issuing from the various wishes, fears, defenses, self-punitive trends, and environmental pressures brought to bear at a given point in time. Whether or not patients are consciously aware of being depressed, "the affect of a depressed patient has the same complex structure as does any other fantasy, thought, action, or symptom" (1974a, p. 32).

Brenner continues this line of thought in "Affects in Psychic Conflict" (1975). a rich presentation whose accessibility and pragmatic clinical importance belie the nuances of reasoning that inform it. Here Brenner shows how affect theory, in relation to both anxiety and depression, provides a crucial vehicle for discerning the unique constellation of conflicts presented by each analysand. This paper is especially noteworthy for its wealth of clinical examples highlighting the role of depressive affect in conflict formation. In addressing conflict through the vehicle of affect theory, Brenner adopts an approach that is entirely dynamic. Moving toward a position to be spelled out more fully in *The Mind in Conflict,* (1982) he shows how psychoanalytic affect theory can afford the clinician a detailed grasp of the elements of intrapsychic conflict that far surpasses the insights provided by the potentially reifying constructs of traditional structural theory.

In a "Depressive Affect, Anxiety, and Psychic Conflict in the Phallic-Oedipal Phase" (1979a). Brenner elaborates on the phenomenology and dynamic meaning of specifically depressive conflicts. This paper, one of very few in which Brenner advocates a terminological departure from the language of classical analysis, introduces the term "calamity" as a substitute for "danger." The former, it is argued, connotes bad experiences that are either impending or have already happened; it can therefore be linked equally well to anxiety or depressive affect. "Danger," by contrast, has primarily a future orientation and is therefore less suggestive of the past events or circumstances associated specifically with depressive affect. Brenner proceeds to recast the major danger situations of classical theory, loss of object, loss of the object's love, and castration anxiety as the three calamities of childhood. He takes pains to dispel the timeworn belief that each of these correlates neatly with a specific psychosexual stage. He argues, for example, that fear of loss of the object and of the object's love frequently plays an important role even in the phallic-oedipal phase. For Brenner, the calamities are interwoven into a tangible and analyzable whole, so that to segregate them along a time line is to compartmentalize the child's mental life artificially.

With this in mind, Brenner goes on to argue that both depressive affect and anxiety enter castration conflicts regardless of the individual's sex, though the former is predominant in girls and the latter in boys. As always, his theoretical formulations culminate in useful therapeutic precepts: (1) View the unpleasurable affect as a symptom masking unsatisfactory compromise formations; and (2) proceed with the work of analysis by looking for the cause of the particular genre of unpleasure that gains expression in the symptom. These and other clinical insights are eloquently put forth in the third chapter of The *Mind in Conflict,* a distillation of over three decades of thinking and writing about the role of affect in psychoanalytic theory and practice.

## DEFENSES

In his presentation of structural theory in the *Elementary Textbook,* Brenner uses the term "ego" in a reified way far removed from the mode of discourse typifying his more recent work. This is particularly true of his explanation of signal anxiety, where he invokes an ego that "produces anxiety as a signal of unpleasure. With the help of the pleasure principle in this way, the ego is able to offer a successful opposition to the emergence of the dangerous impulses" (1955, p. 79). Not so his concept of defense, which even in 1955 has much the same character to be found in his writings of the 1970s and 1980s. To the question, "What defenses does the ego offer against the id?," the *Elementary Textbook* answers as follows:

> The ego can use anything which lies at hand that will serve the purpose. Any ego attitude, any real perception, a change in attention, furtherance of another id impulse which is safer than the dangerous one and will compete with it, a vigorous attempt to neutralize the energy of the dangerous drive, the formation of identifications, or the promotion of fantasy can be used alone or in any combination in a defensive way. In a word, the ego can and does use all of the processes of normal ego formation and ego function for defensive purposes at one time or another [p. 80].

In a series of papers following the *Elementary Textbook,* Brenner develops his view of defensive processes as content-neutral by focusing on repression. In 1957 he ended a scholarly review of Freud's concept of

repression by underscoring the status of repression in Freud's final view of defense: Repression is but one of several defense mechanisms the ego may employ against drive derivatives, the latter being the source of anxiety. The target of repression is ordinarily a libidinal drive, but it may be an aggressive drive derivative or superego demand as well. Finally, the mechanism of repression is the establishment of a countercathexis of the ego; it follows that repression becomes possible only after significant ego development has occurred.

In a paper published ten years later, Brenner (1967) explicitly attempted to apply the principle of multiple function to the theory of repression. He was thereupon led to revise Freud's classical concept of repression which he contends has two aspects: (1) the belief that repression is tantamount to barring certain mental elements access to conscious mental life, and (2) the derivative notion that the intrusion of these elements into consciousness betokens the failure of repression or "return of the repressed." Against this, Brenner argues that repression results from an interplay of forces within the mind in which the balance is predominantly in favor of those forces seeking to bar one or several mental representations from consciousness. Since the repressing forces usually achieve but limited success, it follows that repressed mental elements routinely enter conscious mental life, quite apart from those instances in which their return signifies the outright failure of repression. In a similar vein, Brenner calls into question the belief that neurotic symptoms signal a failure of repression and are thus tantamount to the return of the repressed:

> Repression signifies a dynamic equilibrium between forces striving for discharge (e.g., an instinctual derivative) and other opposing forces (defenses, superego prohibition). If something happens to shift the balance among these forces in a direction which is unfavorable to the ego's defenses, there-suit will be an increased emergence into conscious mental life and action of the previously instinctual derivative. If the shift is long continued, and if the emergence of the instinctual derivative is felt to be dangerous (arousing signal anxiety). the compromise which results will be of the nature of a neurotic symptom or character trait. By the same token, a shift in the equilibrium which is favorable to the defensive forces, and which diminishes a patient's tendency to react with anxiety to an instinctual derivative which has given rise to a neu-

> rotic symptom, will result in the symptom disappearing or becoming less severe [pp. 398–399].

We might say that for Brenner the vicissitudes of symptomatic behavior and character pathology derive from the continually changing balance between opposing forces within the mind. In a paper of 1981, "Defense and Defense Mechanisms," he elaborates as implicit in this viewpoint a "major, even a radical revision of this part of conflict theory" (p. 558). He now states boldly that discrete defense "mechanisms" simply do not exist.

Rather, "defense is an aspect of mental functioning that is definable only in terms of its consequences, reduction of unpleasure associated with the drive derivative, i.e., with the instinctual wish, or with superego functioning" (p. 559). It follows for Brenner that the very aspects of mental functioning which in certain contexts function as defenses against drive derivatives can in other contexts facilitate gratification of the same derivatives. Since the mental mechanisms traditionally equated with defenses serve nondefensive purposes as well, it is erroneous to characterize them, as intrinsically defense related.

The argument that there are no ego functions exclusively subserving defense implies a radically broadened concept of ego. Brenner's revision here does not parallel that of Hartmann (1939). who assigned certain aspects of ego functioning to an entirely "conflict-free" sphere. Rather, in contending that no ego function can be assigned a priori to a particular sphere of functioning, Brenner adopts a viewpoint that is nonmechanistic and nonreductionistic, and, as such, "faithful to the facts of life" (p. 563).

The language in which he casts his insights into the reversibility of defensive and drive-related purposes is action-oriented, dovetailing in certain respects with the "action language" proposed by Schafer (1976). Consider Brenner's characterization of a defense as a "say no to whatever is the target of defense" (p. 562). Consider as well how he describes the mind at work:

> When unpleasure is aroused or threatens to be aroused, one does whatever one can to avoid and reduce it. When one desires ratification and pleasure, one does whatever one can to achieve it. . . . It is the function served by what one does that determines whether it is properly called defense [pp. 564–565].

The ready identifiability of a particular analysand's "repertory of defenses" is another traditional assumption called into question by Brenner's functional estimation of defensive processes. His contention that all aspects of ego functioning are all-purpose, capable of subserving, variously, drive gratification, ego defense, and superego prohibition, militates against the belief that analysands have limited defensive repertories. For Brenner, any repertory of defense necessarily draws on every aspect of ego functioning:

> Thus to speak of a characteristic repertory of defense is really to say only that prominent neurotic symptoms and/or character traits are apt to be persistent in any patient and to require repeated analysis and interpretation in the course of treatment. . . . It is not patients who show a limited repertory of defensive methods; it is one or another symptom, or other compromise formation, which is characterized by a special method or methods of defense [pp. 567–568].

In chapter 5 of *The Mind in Conflict* (1982) Brenner offers additional insights drawn from his estimation of defense. Linking his reconceptualization of defensive processes to his unified theory of affect, he observes that defenses may be directed not only against drive derivatives or affect or superego functioning, but against the anxiety or depressive affect they mobilized. In the latter instance, defense may be directed at the sensation of unpleasure, the ideational correlate of the unpleasure, that is, the real or fantasied calamity, or both. Further, defenses neither disappear during the course of analysis nor become increasingly "normal." Rather, their character and preemptoriness alter as the balance among opposing mental forces changes in response to the analytic work (p. 92).

It is clear that Brenner's reformulation of the concept of defense and the status of defensive processes in mental functioning will not win easy acceptance. In particular, his proposal that we dispense entirely with the notion of defense mechanisms will likely encounter strong resistance in view of the longevity of this concept and its identification with both Freud and his daughter Anna. But here, as elsewhere, Brenner theorizes in a clinically relevant way that enhances our understanding of the analytic process. He is awed neither by traditional concepts nor by their traditional deployment. Rather, he is intent on doing full justice to the data that follow from the use of Freud's psychoanalytic method. Drawing

on scientific sensibilities tempered by broad clinical experience, he subjects each psychoanalytic formulation he examines to the tests of clarity, consistency, logical validity, and clinical usefulness. His proposaal that we abandon the concept of defense mechanism is not offered lightly; though it may make case presentations more difficult or simply less facile, it augurs well for our day-to-day clinical work. It aids us in keeping the analysand "as a whole" in the foreground, relegating isolated drive derivatives and defenses to a subordinate role both conceptual and clinical.

## TECHNIQUE

> The psychoanalytic situation is organized according to the psychoanalytic theory of mental functioning and in keeping with the goals and aims of psychoanalysis as a therapy. Whatever is consonant with the dynamic principles of psychoanalysis and with the goals of psychoanalytic therapy is properly part of the analytic situation. Whatever is in conflict with those principles and goals is not legitimately part of the psychoanalytic situation and should be avoided and discarded [Arlow and Brenner, 1966, p. 43].

In this passage from 'The Psychoanalytic Situation," we encounter again the leitmotif of Brenner's work. The "theory of mental functioning" that "organizes" the psychoanalytic part of the analyst's task is to understand the nature and origins of his patient's mental conflicts" (Brenner 1976, p. 33). Issues of technique can be addressed only from the standpoint of the analyst's comprehension of the analysand's psychic conflicts. Brenner's work in this area has a twofold intent: (1) to show how specific aspects of technique subserve psychoanalytic conflict theory, and (2) to see to it that no single element of technique, and no single explanation or justification of an element of technique, achieves a weight disproportionate to its status within this theory of mental functioning. Brenner repeatedly cautions his psychoanalytic colleages regarding the pitfalls, theoretical and clinical, of overvaluing specific aspects of technique, or specific rationales for technique, currently in vogue. In the Arlow-Brenner (1966) paper, the cautionary note centers on the view of the "psychoanalytic situation" popularized by Leo Stone, Rene Spitz, Elizabeth Zetzel, and others in the early 1960s. These authors invoke an "a *priori* assumption that the psychoanalytic situation re-creates the relationship between mother and infant during the earliest months of life"

(1966, p. 23). They hold as a corollary that analytic termination is invariably an "experience that parallels that of weaning" (p. 24). Arlow and Brenner counter that "while this is doubtless true in many instances, it seems unlikely that it is invariably the case" (p. 23). They warn here against what Hartmann (1939) called a genetic fallacy: 'The fact that the first situation is dependence in the life of every individual, his relationship with his mother," they write, "does not prove that every subsequent relationship of dependence produces the prototype" (Arlow and Brenner, 1966, p. 26). They offer case examples that run counter to the then current estimation of the analytic situation: a patient who did not react to termination with separation anxiety and another, for whom the "basis of the transference was not the patient's early tie to her mother, but her later relationship with her father" (p. 28).

Arlow and Brenner's approach in this paper illustrates the empirical open mindedness, the receptivity to the yield of psychoanalytic inquiry that will guide Brenner through a succession of works on technique: "The meaning of the psychoanalytic situation is not the same for every patient . . . analytic data are the only basis on which one can validate the unconscious significance which the analytic situation holds for a particular patient" (p. 43). Brenner's determination to examine and justify elements of technique with respect to the dynamic principles of analysis is expressed in his reconsideration of dream interpretation. In the chapter on dream psychology in *Psychoanalytic Concepts and the Structural Theory* (Arlow and Brenner, 1964). Brenner recasts the analytic understanding of dreaming from the standpoint of structural theory. Brenner goes beyond Freud's formulations in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) by reconceptualizing dreams as the product of the interplay of id, ego, and superego; as such, they are compromise formations. The technical consequence of this structural reappraisal is, ironically, the dethroning of dream interpretation from its privileged position in clinical work. As but one example of compromise formation, the dream is hardly unique in affording the analyst a view of the analysand's unconscious conflicts. This position is articulated with great force in a paper, "Dreams in Clinical Psychoanalytic Practice" (1969b):

> It is not only the case with dreams that they are a compromise formation among instinctual id wishes, defenses motivated by anxiety or guilt and superego demands or prohibitions. The same is true of neurotic symptoms, parapraxes, slips, jokes, many charac-

> ter traits, one's choice of a profession, one's sexual practices and preferences, daydreams, conscious childhood memories, including screen memories, one's reaction to a play, film or book, one's social habits and activities in general, and above all, in every patient's so-called free associations [p. 336].

In his Brill Lecture of 1966, "Some Comments on Technical Precepts in Psychoanalysis" (1969c). Brenner uses his view of dreams as situated on a continuum of compromise formations to reconsider two standard technical precepts: (1) Never interpret a patient's first dream, and (2) dream interpretation is the "royal road to the unconscious." Brenner argues that technical precepts, these included, are not universal truths applicable to all analysands regardless of time and place; rather, technical strategies can be justified only in terms of the requirements of specific psychoanalytic situations, which subsume the cognitive style and interpretive orientation of a particular analyst. The first precept he appraises as follows: "A first dream may and should be used like any other analytic material: in a way that is appropriate to the circumstances of the analytic situation at the time. No single rule-of-thumb can suffice to cover all the various possibilities" (p. 342). As for the "royal road," here Brenner is equally pragmatic. Dreams are valuable grist for the analytic mill, to be sure, but they enjoy no privileged status. Certain analysts may be especially drawn to them in elucidating the analysand's conflicts, but other analysts, with different cognitive styles and interpretive orientations, may focus more profitably on other kinds of interpretable phenomena. In either case, analysis may proceed to a satisfactory conclusion:

> Whether the one view and the practical consequences which appear to be associated with it has any substantial advantage over the others is not possible to decide at present. All that one can say at present with any degree of assurance is this: There is no convincing evidence that dream interpretation still offers the quickest and easiest road to knowledge of the hidden workings of the mind at the present time as it doubtless did 65 years ago [p. 345].

Brenner similarly demystifies some long-held assumptions regarding transference analysis. In the same paper, he judges anachronistic the traditional dictum that transference should be interpreted only when it constitutes a resistance. Rooted in Freud's initial belief that "the pervasive

effect of a strongly positive transference" is central to the analytic treatment (p. 336). this dictum and its rationale are undercut by the theoretical reformulations undertaken by Freud conceptualized the therapeutic action of analysis in terms of overcoming resistances and observed that positive transference couId as easily serve resistance as could the negative variety. This theoretical shift anticipated what we have learned in the decades following: *all* transference must be analyzed, as one simply cannot tell in advance whether a transference is in the service of defense.

As for the traditional belief that transference acting out necessarily impedes analysis, here again Brenner avoids categorical injunctions in favor of a more measured appreciation of the vicissitudes of different psychoanalytic situations:

> In other words, acting out in the transference is sometimes readily analyzable, sometimes analyzable only slowly and with difficulty, and sometimes not at all, at least for the time being. It is not always especially accessible to analysis, as our precept would have it. It is not necessarily an impediment or danger to analysis which must be forestalled in some nonanalytic way [1969c, p. 31].

Finally, as for the dictum that every interpretation must be a transference interpretation if it is to be effective (p. 347). Brenner presents counterinstances demonstrating that this precept too yields to the requirements of specific transactions. Take, for example, the patient who comes to an analytic session upset because of the sudden death or illness of a close relative. The transferential aspects of his reaction are certainly important. But one is not thereby "justified in following the maxim to the extent of ignoring and failing to interpret to the patient other aspects of his reaction to the situation which are important to recognize and understand" (p. 348).

The prudent correctives are elaborated in Brenner's *Psychoanalytic Technique and Psychic Conflict* (1976). Here Brenner stresses that transference, understood as the valence of the past in the relationships of the present, is hardly unique to the analytic situation. On the contrary, it is ubiquitous in everyday life. It follows, then, that the distinguishing characteristic of the analytic relationship is not transference per se, but rather "its place in the relationship, i.e., the analyst's attitude toward the transference and the use he makes of it. It is the analytic attitude that is the

hallmark of analysis, not the phenomenon subsumed under the heading of transference" (p. 112).

Since it is the analytic attitude toward transference manifestations, not a preoccupation with transference analysis, that is constitutive of psychoanalysis, summary pronouncements about the tatter's preeminence in analytic treatment are misleading. Rather, the requirements of specific analyses will determine the role of transference interpretation relative to other types. Consistent with his technical revisions (1969c). Brenner insists that "transference should be neither ignored nor focused on to the exclusion of all else; it should be neither excluded from analytic work nor dragged in by the heels" (1976, p. 128).

This attitude toward transference is central to the argument of the important 1979 paper, "Working Alliance, Therapeutic Alliance, and Transference." Here in the same questioning spirit in which he contested Stone's (1961) characterization of the analytic situation in 1966, Brenner confronts the widely accepted notion, first formulated by Zetzel (1965) and Ralph Greenson (1965). of a therapeutic or working alliance distinct from transference and exempt from interpretation. Examining the data invoked by Zetzel and Greenson in support of the concept's clinical usefulness, he concludes that the evidence does not justify a position of an extratransferential and uninterpretable dimension *oi* the analytic relationship. He also questions whether the working alliance, however conceived, can be promoted by anything other than accurate and well-timed interpretations. For Brenner, the analyst's humanistic bearing toward the patient is neither constitutes an analytic relationship nor is sufficient to insure a successful analytic outcome. Implicit in the working alliance paper is the belief that the analyst's attitude toward the analysand, no less than that of theanalysand toward the analyst, is a compromise formation. In a more recent publication, "Countertransference and Compromise Formation" (1985). Brenner expands on this formulation. Earlier (1979b). he asserted that all aspects of the analysand's relationship with the analyst, including the desire to cooperate, are interpretable. In 1985 he makes the same point with regard to the analyst, whose countertransferential attitude toward the analysand is invariably a compromise formation and consequently is understandable in terms of the components of conflict, affect states, defenses, self-punitive trends, drive derivatives, and the like.

The working alliance and countertransference papers are in a sense complementary. Jointly they offer a broad perspective on issues

of technique. Adopting this perspective, we can no longer make easy correlations of specific affects or clinical syndromes with individual drive derivatives; for example, depression cannot be equated with problems in the oral phase. Similarly, particular therapeutic reactions are not easily associated with individual agencies within the psychic apparatus; negative therapeutic reactions cannot be equated with superego problems. In each case Brenner obliges us to look at both sides of the explanatory coin —at the issues of drive gratification and drive-related prohibitions that codetermine every symptom, behavior, and character trait. Like his theoretical contributions, his contributions to technique achieve their explanatory force through terminological clarification. In the paper on the "working alliance" (1979b). Brenner steers us away from a seductive terminological innovation simply by reminding us of the universality of transference. In the counter-transference paper (1985). he offers new insights into the analyst's relation to the analysand by showing us the "explanatory reach of the concept of compromise formation" first used by Freud in the 1890s.

In his contributions to technique, as in all his work, Brenner is keenly aware of the interdependency of theory and practice. His illuminating commentaries on technical issues often have the serendipitous side effect of clarifying the theoretical status of the concept under review. For example, Brenner's cautionary remarks regarding transference analysis contribute to our understanding of the status of transference within analytic theory. Inn the chapter on defense analysis in *Psychoanalytic Technique and Psychic Conflict* (1976). his technical arguments against the dictum that defenses should invariably be analyzed before the instinctual derivatives they ward off add to our understanding of the concept of defense. In the course of arguing that drive, affect, defense, and the like should be interpreted as they appear in the patient's associations "and not according to some schematic formula" (p. 64). he observes that analysis cannot alleviate defensive operations, but can only alter the structure and adaptive adequacy of compromise formations: "Defenses are never abolished as such, not even the 'pathogenic' or 'infantile' ones" (p. 74). Likewise, his commentary on free association in relation to technique is theoretically enlightening as a critique of the suitability of this term to characterize what actually occurs in analysis:

> Free association is a bad term to apply to the psychoanalytic method. . . . It obscures the fact that an analytic patient is often

> asked to associate to a specific conscious stimulus. And second and more important, it obscures the fact that Freud's great discovery, the discovery that became the very cornerstone of psychoanalytic technique, was that associations are never free. They are, on the contrary, always caused by some psychic stimuli or other [p. 190].

Similarly, Brenner's paper on the "working alliance" is not only a storehouse of information on the relative dosages of frustration and gratification that should typify the analytic situation, but a persuasive demonstration of the fact that such issues cannot be dissociated from understanding *of* the theoretical status of transference. Brenner's most recent contribution to technique, soon to be published in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly,* also enriches theory. This reassessment of working through not only examines the clinical development we customarily associate with this concept but also questions whether the term is clinically useful as a characterization of such development.

The five foregoing synopses hardly constitute a comprehensive presentation of Brenner's contributions to psychoanalysis. At best they provide a helpful overview of certain broad areas to which he has given continuing attention over the course of his analytic career. Although synopses cannot capture the subtlety of Brenner's expositions, their usefulness exceeds the summary of "content" they provide. Taken together, they highlight the interrelationships between Brenner's contributions to the various topics and convey a clear sense of the unity of his psychoanalytic outlook. By this I mean that all of Brenner's contributions to theory and practice are grounded on a consistent and clear-sighted estimation of what psychoanalysis *is* and what it is that psychoanalysts do. His conception of analysis as a science of mental conflict based on data obtained in the analytic situation informs all his contributions to theory. Similarly, his belief in the interpretability of the myriad of symptomatic, behavioral, and characterological compromise formations through which psychic conflict is expressed informs all his contributions to the technique of psychoanalysis.

His specific reappraisals of affect, defense, instinct theory, structural theory, and principles of technique follow from these essential principles of his psychoanalytic *Weltanschaung.*

In recent years Brenner has done much to keep the dialogue among analysts of different theoretical persuasions on track by explicating these

topics in terms of the basic principles of the psychoanalytic view of mental life. Whether we consider his questioning of a technical assumption (e.g., the primacy of dream interpretation in analysis). his critique of recent terminological innovations (e.g., therapeutic alliance). or his reaffirmation and amplification of a basic theoretical precept (e.g., the role of compromise formation). it is these superordinate principles that are both the points of departure and the conceptual testing ground for his proposals.

Through his emphasis on the principles that guide theory and practice, Brenner has emerged as one of the outstanding teachers of his generation, a teacher whose pedagogical message transcends the specific content of his books and papers. One may say that Brenner is an analyst whose deep commitment to Freudian principles has sharpened his probing revaluations of the concepts and explanatory perspectives that Freud himself developed. And this is perhaps Brenner's greatest contribution as a theorist and as a teacher—his work demonstrates that an analysis can retain both the vitality and the innovativeness that will take it beyond Freud's legacy only by adhering to the principles of mental functioning fundamental to Freud's science of the mind.

The next work to consider is Brenner's final statement about his work. Richards reviews this book as a continued statement of Brenner's contribution.

*Psychoanalysis or Mind and Meaning*, by Charles Brenner, is a book not to be reviewed so much as appreciated. Brenner tells us that he has spent two years collecting in one place all the conclusions about the way the mind works that he has arrived at over his more than fifty years as an analyst. He reached these conclusions by proceeding as all scientists proceed, developing hypotheses or theories, collecting data, and then determining whether or not the data support or contradict those hypotheses and theories. And on more than one occasion, he has framed a new conclusion to replace his earlier conclusions or the conclusions of others, including Freud's. For example, he is most convincing when he marshals the data against Freud's conclusion that there is a principle of mental activity that is beyond the pleasure principle.

By way of a historical aside, he tell us that, while he was still a candidate at New York Psychoanalytic Institute, he attended a session in which the question was raised of whether or not psychoanalytic theories had factual evidence to support them. He summarizes the facts that Freud had marshaled in support of the repetition compulsion. Although he does

not say so directly, the reader is likely to conclude from Brenner's discussion of the repetition compulsion that, in this instance, he agreed with Freud's method but not with Freud's conclusion.

Brenner acknowledges that Freud also had doubts about the data, that conscious unpleasure can cover over unconscious pleasure, that pain can gratify a masochistic wish or a need for punishment. But Freud, not letting it go at that, postulated a death drive that "offers strong evidence in favor of the view that repetition is more important in mental life than are the attempts to gain pleasure and avoid unpleasure" (p. 16). Brenner notes. He points out that Freud's evidence here is not psychological in nature. Arguments about the tendency of all protoplasm to die have "nothing to do with observations made by using the psychoanalytic method of investigation" (p. 16).

In 1964, Brenner (along with Jacob Arlow) argued—persuasively, for many—against the priority of the economic and topographical metapsychological points of view in Freud's theorizing, and made the case for the structural model in a stronger fashion than even Freud did in 1926.[1] But Brenner has also gone on more recently to modify his own views and move from a model of psychic structure with potentially reifiable structures—id, ego, and superego—to more functional categories and processes. The ego becomes the person, drive becomes wish, and the superego becomes a compromise formation, as I wrote in my introduction to a festschrift for Brenner,[2] anticipating by a decade the direction he was taking:

It is conceivable that Brenner will eventually articulate a model of the mind in conflict in which the interpretations of the elements of conflict is such that the traditional concepts of id, ego and superego become superfluous. What Brenner offers us is an ego which is not a fully integrated agency informed by the primary process but is dynamically indistinguishable from a neurotic symptom: a language of persons and individuals instead of a one of hypothetical mental structure: a view of the child motivated above all by the need to win his or her parents' love. [p. 11]

For me, the most powerful concept that Brenner champions is that of compromise formation. It can be found early in Freud, but was never

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[1]Arlow, J.A. & Brenner, C. (1964). *Psychoanalytic Concepts and the Structural Theory.* New York: Internatinoal Universities Press.

[2]Richards, A.D. & Willick, M.S., eds. (1986). *Psychoanalysis: The Science of Mental Conflict, Essays in Honor of Charles Brenner.* New York: Analytic Press.

given the pride of place by Freud that Brenner gives it. The concept of compromise is based on facts, the observation of the components of mental conflict—wish, defense, affect, guilt, and adaptations, as well as, in particular symptoms, behaviors, inhibitions, and personality traits—in short, of everything that is part of mental life. The concept of compromise formation is the algebra of how the mind works and the path to the essential task of psychoanalysis in determining meaning.

Chapter 4 of Brenner's book is the best primer on how to conduct an analysis that I have read. In twenty-three pages, he presents an approach to psychoanalytic technique that both the beginning candidate and the seasoned practitioner will find useful. He also makes the important point that psychoanalysis is not defined by position or furniture, lying on a couch or sitting in a chair, or by the number of weekly visits. It is defined by an analytic attitude— the search for meaning, the effort to understand, the conviction that everything a patient says or does is a potentially useful source of information about the patient's conflicts and compromise formations.

Earlier, Brenner wrote: "What words one uses in constructing one's theories [are] … less important, in most instances, than what meaning the words have in terms of the new data and new generalizations about those data that constitute psychoanalytic theory" (p. 208). [3] This statement reflects his disinclination to supplant the language of Freud's discoveries with trendier terms (*self-object, container, projective identification*, and *intrasubjectivity* come to mind) that offer no real gain in conceptual understanding or explanatory power.

This volume demonstrates that Brenner is not a revolutionary, but a modifier, to use Bergmann's term.[4] He is an extender who innovates by addressing the meaning of traditional psychoanalytic concepts—drive, defense, superego, affect, transference, countertransference, and regression. But this book, perhaps a final statement from Brenner, demonstrates that his contributions culminate in significant reformulations that are part of a process by which Freudian thinking in psychoanalytic discourse accommodates the growth of psychoanalytic knowledge.

Brenner's book can also be read as a challenge to alternative schools to provide a comprehensive and coherent presentation of their funda-

[3]Brenner, C. (1980). Metapsychology and psychoanalytic theory. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 49:189–214.

[4]Bergmann, M. S. (1997). The historical roots of psychoanalytic orthodoxy. *Int. J. Psychoanal. Psychother.*, 78:69–86.

mental principles and concepts; thus, he also challenges the notion of psychoanalytic pluralism. Brenner is offering us his total composite theory,[5] whose principles I and many of my colleagues find persuasive; these principles should continue to be studied by the broader psychoanalytic community.

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[5]See also: Rangell, L. (2007). The Road to Unity in Psychoanalytic Theory. Lanham, MD: Aronson

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